

Fall 8-15-2008

ENG 5500-001: Practicum in Writing Center Theory and Practice

Tim Taylor
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2008



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Taylor, Tim, "ENG 5500-001: Practicum in Writing Center Theory and Practice" (2008). *Fall 2008*. 148.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2008/148

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2008 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2008 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

ENGLISH 5500
Practicum in Writing Center Theory and Practice
 3110 Coleman Hall (The Writing Center)
 Fridays 1-3 pm

Tim N. Taylor
 Writing Center Director
 3820 CH, 581-6309
tntaylor@eiu.edu

Fern Kory
 Assistant Writing Center Director
 3365 CH, 581-6291
fkory@eiu.edu

Goals and Expectations

This practicum will serve as a seminar in the theory-practice (*praxis*) of consulting in the writing center. Each week, in addition to discussing reading assignments, we will devote substantial class time to discussing issues regarding your work in the Writing Center.

Practicum participants are expected to complete these tasks:

- Attend all practicum meetings
- Complete all reading assignments
- Contribute to class discussion on a consistent basis
- Prepare and offer several collaborative presentations
- Present a thought-provoking and interesting “Search and Share” segment based on self-directed reading or electronic resources
- Post weekly responses to an electronic journal through WebCT
- Complete two theory/practice reflection memos based on two separate tutoring sessions
- Craft a “philosophy of writing center consulting” based on reading materials and actual tutoring session(s)

Texts

Tutoring Writing: A Practical Guide for Conferences. McAndrew and Reigstad (2001).

A Tutor's Guide: Helping Writers One to One, 2nd ed. Rafoth (2005).

Writing Center Research: Extending the Conversation. Gillespie, *et al.* (2002).

The Longman Guide to Writing Center Theory and Practice. Barnett and Blumner (2008).

Attendance and Participation

You are expected to attend and be on time for every class session. If an emergency arises, however, please contact both Dr. Taylor and Dr. Kory in advance via email or office phone. Because we begin the practicum by talking about experiences that involve and effect all tutors, because much of the work done in class is collaborative in nature, because you are serious scholars who seek to learn and improve yourselves, and because being a graduate assistant is a professional and paid responsibility, you should attend every class meeting. Although the practicum does not involve a letter grade (pass/fail), it is possible not to get credit for 5500.

Reading and Presentations

Readings will introduce issues relevant to your work in the Writing Center and issues that connect to teaching writing. In our discussion we will make connections between the theories,

ideas, and experiences presented and how those concepts and examples connect to, critique, and inform your own work as a Writing Consultant in EIU's Writing Center.

Collaborative Work

For a number of class meetings, you will work with others to lead discussion about issues raised by assigned readings. We encourage creative ways in which to get us engaged with the reading material. In-class exercises, handouts, role-playing exercises, and PowerPoint presentations are recommended. Groups should use time outside of class to brainstorm and plan how they will facilitate class discussion.

Search and Share

Each week one member of the class will select a reading or an electronic resource that will be helpful for writing center consultants. You can find reading in one of the many journals at the Writing Center (*CCC, College English, Teaching English in the Two-Year College, The Writing Center Journal, The Writing Lab Newsletter*) or in some respectable virtual environment. Respectable virtual environments might include the Web sites of professional organizations (NCTE, CCCC, IWCA) or online academic journals (*Praxis: A Writing Center Journal, The Dangling Modifier, et al.*).

For each "Search and Share," you must prepare a properly documented handout that captures the overall thesis and main points of the article or presents a brief but concrete description of the resource. You should also include our evaluation of the reading/resource. What are the strengths, weaknesses, and important questions raised or not raised? The handout that you provide works as a base for discussion about the theoretical assumptions and practical advice of the article or resource, so it must be usefully detailed.

Journals

One of the purposes of keeping a journal is to document experiences and insights that may otherwise get lost to memory. In a graduate seminar like this one, another purpose might be share entries with colleagues so that they can learn from you. The journal you are asked to keep is electronic in nature and housed within WebCT, which will be explained during the first week of class. While some of your journal entries will be guided by specific themes and readings, the majority will be based on insights gleaned from tutoring sessions, interactions with other tutors, and Writing Center-related readings. Approximately 500 words per week is the goal. Drs. Taylor and Kory will occasionally respond to postings.

Theory/Practice Reflection Memo

Approximately halfway through the semester a formal theory/practice reflection memo will be due. The purpose of this writing assignment is for you to reflect about how a specific consulting session connects to one or more of the readings we've discussed. In the memo, which should be addressed both Dr. Taylor and Dr. Kory, you will describe specific parts of the consulting session and then connect that experience to at least one reading assignment in a cohesive way—whether the experience affirms or critiques or complicates an issue or idea. The memo concludes with your own reflection about how the issues involved connect to your goals as a professional (teacher, writer, among others). The conclusion of the memo should connect to how the issues uncovered by the consulting session and the reading relate to your own professional and

scholarly development. The memo must have a three part structure: 1) description of consulting session, 2) connection and relevance to appropriate reading/s, and 3) reflection about the session or concept and how it relates to your professional goals.

Observation/Reflection Memos

Near the end of the semester two observation/reflection memos will be due; you will have to observe two different colleagues in sessions at the Writing Center. The purpose of this writing assignment is for you to observe a colleague's consulting session with a student, describe that session to the person you observed, and then reflect on what you learned from watching this consultant's work (what you liked, what was effective, what was innovative) coupled with one kind recommendation for improvement. Before you observe your peers, you may also want to ask them if there is anything they would like you to focus on, look for, or comment on. You submit the memos to the writing center consultants observed and Drs. Taylor and Kory (Cc them).

Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting

Since consulting in the writing center (and teaching writing) melds what some perceive as a theory/practice divide, it is important to have a pedagogical grounding from which you enact your practice as a consultant, your *praxis*. Composition instructors have philosophies of teaching writing, and you should have philosophies of writing center consulting. So the purpose of the document is for you to explain your philosophy of consulting with writers by synthesizing your own personal beliefs, assumptions, experiences, and ideas with writing center research and scholarship that we have read over the whole semester. This document will serve as a capstone for the course, a piece of writing that will direct your work in the spring semester and also influence your philosophy of teaching writing if you become a graduate assistant who teaches his or her own class in the second year.

Syllabus

All assignments and due date are tentative,
and changes to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Week 1: 8-29 | “What Tutoring Is: Models and Strategies,” TW (42-69)
“Setting the Agenda for the Next Thirty Minutes,” Macauley; ATG (1-8)
“The Idea of a Writing Center,” North; LG (63-78)
Introduction to WebCT
Sign-ups for Search and Share |
| Week 2: 9-5 | “What Line? I Didn’t See any Line,” Wingate; ATG (9-16)
**Group 1— “Talk to Me: Engaging Reluctant Writers,” Harris; ATG (23-33)
“Minimalist Tutoring: Making the Student Do All the Work,”
Brooks; LG (219-24) |
| Week 3: 9-12 | “Tutoring Different People;” TW (89-102)
**Group 2—“Tutoring in Emotionally Charged Sessions,” Agostinelli, <i>et al.</i> ; ATG (34-40)
Search and Share |
| Week 4: 9-19 | **Group 3—“Recent Developments in Assisting ESL Writers,” Ritter; ATG (54-62)
“Crossing Cultures with International ESL Writers: The Tutor as Contact Zone Contact Person,” Severino; ATG (41-53)
<i>Writing Across Borders</i> , Robertson
Search and Share |
| Week 5: 9-26 | **Group 4—“The Return of the Suppressed: Tutoring Stories in a Transitional Space,” Welch; WCR (203-20)
“The Writing and Tutoring Processes;” TW (21-30)
“Tutoring When the Writer Has a Topic but No Draft;” TW (31-41)
Search and Share |
| Week 6: 10-3 | ## “Grammar, Grammars, and the Teaching of Grammar,” Hartwell
“Revision Strategies of Student Writers and Experienced Adult Writers,” Sommers
Search and Share |
| Week 7: 10-10 | Fall Break (No Classes)
Theory/Practice Reflection Memo due |
| Week 8: 10-17 | **Group 1—“Organizing Ideas: Focus Is the Key,” Trupe; ATG (98-106)
“Helping Writers to Write Analytically,” Rafoth; ATG (107-14)
Search and Share |

- Week 9: 10-24 ## Plagiarism handouts
 **Group 2—"Can You Proofread This?," Rapp Young; ATG (140-158)
 "Using Others' Words: Quoting, Summarizing, and Documenting
 Sources," Dossin; ATG (159-66)
 Search and Share
- Week 10: 10-31 **Group 3--"Whispers of Coming and Going': Lessons from Fannie,"
 DiPardo; LG (350-67)
 "Peer Tutoring and the 'Conversation of Mankind,'" Bruffee; LG (206-18)
 "Freud in the Writing Center: The Psychoanalytics of Tutoring Well,"
 Murphy; LG (296-301)
 Search and Share
Observation/Reflection Memo due
- Week 11: 11-7 **Group 4—"Straddling the Virtual Fence," Hobson; LG (475-93)
 "Information Literacy and the Writing Center," Clark; LB (561-70)
 Search and Share
- Week 12: 11-14 "What Should the Relationship Between the Writing Center and the
 Writing Program Be?," Waldo; LG (168-75)
 "Redefining Our Existence: An Argument for Short- and Long-Term
 Goals and Objectives," Barnett; LG (194-201)
 Search and Share
Observation/Reflection Memo due
- Week 13: 11-21 "Rethinking the WAC/Writing Center Connection," Pemberton; LG (442-
 57)
 "Writing Centers and WAC Programs as Infostructures," Murphy and
 Law; LG (458-71)
 Search and Share
- Thanksgiving Break
- Week 14: 12-5 ***Peer Review of Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting***
 "Revisiting 'The Idea of a Writing Center,'" North; LG (79-91)
Take 20, Taylor
- Week 15: 12-12 **Philosophy of Writing Center Consulting due**
 Due: End-of-the-semester PARTY

Key

TW = *Tutoring Writing*

WCR = *Writing Center Research*

** = reading assignment facilitated by a group

ATG = *A Tutor's Guide*

LG = *The Longman Guide...*

= handout